Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended)   A method for detecting a predisposition to <u>noncryptogenic</u> liver disease in an individual human, the method comprising:

<u>determining said predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease by</u> analyzing an individual <u>human</u> for a change in genotype of keratin <u>relative to wild-type sequence</u> wherein said ~~alteration~~ <u>change</u> is selected from <u>a codon encoding</u> K18 Δ64-71; K18 T102A; K18 H127L; K18 I149V; K18 R260Q; K18 E275G; K18 Q284R; K18 T294M; K18 T296I; K18 G339R; K8 G52V; K8 Y53H; K8 G61C; K8 R340H; K8 G433S; K8 R453C; and K8 1-465(I)RDT(468),

wherein the change is associated with a predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease <u>in said individual human</u>.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A method for detecting a predisposition to ~~noncryptogenic liver disease~~ <u>increased risk for viral hepatitis or acute fulminant hepatitis</u> in an individual human, the method comprising:

<u>determining said predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease by</u> analyzing <u>nucleic acid of</u> an individual <u>human</u> for <u>a</u> change in <u>codon</u> genotype <u>relative to a wild-type sequence</u> ~~of~~ <u>that encodes</u> keratin K8 at position 340[[.]]<u>,</u>

wherein a mutation at position 340 of keratin K8 from CGT→CAT is associated with a predisposition to ~~noncryptogenic liver disease~~ <u>increased risk for viral hepatitis or acute fulminant hepatitis in said individual human</u>.

4-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended)   The method of Claim 3, wherein said analyzing the <u>nucleic acid</u> ~~genomic or mRNA sequences~~ comprises the steps of:

amplifying a region of the K8 coding sequences from isolated genomic DNA or mRNA to provide an amplified fragment;

detecting the presence of a mutated sequence in said amplified fragment.

7. (original)   The method of Claim 6, wherein said detecting step comprises hybridization with a probe specific for said mutated sequence or digestion with specific restriction enzymes.

8-14. (canceled)